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141755Z Jun 00

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ACTION PRM-01

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	INL-01	DODE-00	DOEE-00	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	OIGO-02	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NEA-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	IIP-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/012W

-----62D772 141751Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6323
INFO USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE
COMMISSIONER USINS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 003231

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM A/S TAFT, PRM/A, PRM/AAA, AF/S, AF/PD,
WHA/CCA

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NAIROBI FOR REFCOORD AND INS

ROME FOR INS

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/14/10

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ATTEMPTS TO
BROKER A DEAL FOR THE CUBANS' RELEASE

REF: HARARE 3164

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASONS 1.5
B/D.

1. (C) ON JUNE 14 LUSAKA-BASED UNITED NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) REGIONAL
REPRESENTATIVE OLUSEYI BAJULAIYE TOLD AMBASSADOR
MCDONALD THAT HE HAD MET WITH A NUMBER OF OFFICIALS IN
HARARE WITH RESPECT TO THE CASES OF CUBAN DOCTORS LEONEL
CORDOVA RODRIGUEZ AND NORIS DEL CARMEN PENA MARTINEZ.
HIS FIRST CALL WAS ON THE REFUGEE COMMISSIONER, MR. I.
T. MUKHARO, TO WHOM HE PROTESTED THE CONDITIONS UNDER
WHICH THE CUBANS WERE BEING HELD. DOCTORS CORDOVA AND
PENA HAVE NO MATTRESS AND RECEIVE ONLY ONE MEAL A DAY,
ACCORDING TO MICHEL SALOMONS, THE UNHCR LAWYER WHO HAD
VISITED THEM EARLIER ON JUNE 14. THE CUBANS ARE SLEEPING
ON BLANKETS ON A HARD, COLD, CEMENT FLOOR IN THE
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE WINTER. SALOMONS WAS ALLOWED ONLY
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TO LEAVE MONEY FOR FOOD AND TOILETRIES, BUT NO BLANKETS
OR A MATTRESS. THE GOROMONZI POLICE EXPLAINED TO
SALOMONS THAT PERSONS IN REMAND STATUS WERE PROHIBITED
FROM SLEEPING ON A MATTRESS, AS IT COULD BE USED TO
CONCEAL WEAPONS.

2. (C) BAJULAIYE REPORTED THAT HE HAD SCHEDULED A
MEETING AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WITH LEGAL
AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS HEAD, DR. ELITA SAKUPWANYA, WHO WAS
CALLED AWAY TO BRIEF FOREIGN MINISTER MUDENGU ALMOST AS
SOON AS THE MEETING BEGAN. THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE
ALSO SPOKE WITH THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO ZIMBABWE,
RODOLFO SARRACINO, WHO ASSURED THE FORMER THAT HIS
GOVERNMENT HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE DOCTORS LEAVING FOR A
THIRD COUNTRY, POSSIBLY CANADA, AND THAT HE HAD SENT A
DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO THAT EFFECT TO THE ZIMBABWEAN
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. BAJULAIYE SAID THAT THE
ZIMBABWEANS FELT THEMSELVES BOXED, UNDER TREMENDOUS
PRESSURE FROM THE CUBANS, THE UNHCR AND THE USG. ASKED
WHAT WAS THE STATUS OF THE CUBAN DOCTORS UNDER
ZIMBABWEAN LAW, BAJULAIYE EXPLAINED THAT THE ZIMBABWEAN

REFUGEE COMMITTEE HAD DECIDED ON JUNE 8 THAT IT "NEITHER RECOGNIZED NOR REJECTED" REFUGEE STATUS FOR THE CUBANS.

13. (C) THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE WANTED TO PRESENT THE ZIMBABWEANS WITH A DEAL. HE WANTED TO PROPOSE THAT THE GOZ HAND OVER CUSTODY OF THE CUBANS IMMEDIATELY TO UNHCR FOR RESETTLEMENT. THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY WOULD BE CANADA, ALTHOUGH CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER JAMES WALL HAD BEEN VERY CAUTIOUS IN A CONVERSATION WITH BAJULAIYE THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 14. THE CANADIAN DIPLOMAT
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EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE CUBANS AND FOUND THE ZIMBABWEAN'S MIDDLE OF THE ROAD DECISION PUZZLING, AS WAS THEIR RELUCTANCE TO RELEASE THEM TO UNHCR. HE PROMISED BAJULAIYE HE WOULD CHECK WITH HIS HEADQUARTERS. HARARE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE JOHN ADU TOLD AMBASSADOR MCDONALD THAT ON JUNE 14 HE HAD MET WITH ZIMBABWEAN HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER DUMISO DABENGWA, WHO SAID HE WOULD NOT ALLOW DOCTORS CORDOVA AND PENA TO LEAVE UNTIL HE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT APPROVED OF WHERE THEY WERE GOING. THE MINISTER DID NOT VOICE OBJECTION TO THAT DESTINATION BEING CANADA. BAJULAIYE THOUGHT THAT THE DECISION TO RELEASE THE CUBANS RESTED WITH THE PRESIDENT. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE WOULD USE THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO COMMUNICATE HIS DECISION TO THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS.

14. (C) THE AMBASSADOR TOLD BAJULAIYE THAT THE USG WOULD BE CONVOKING THE ZIMBABWEAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES TO EXPLAIN THE USG'S SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT THIS MATTER AND THE TREATMENT OF THE CUBANS. HE ALSO TOLD THE UNHCR REPRESENTAT